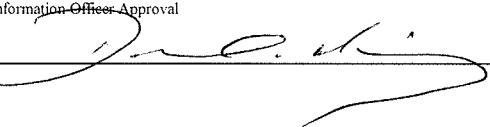




# King County Information Technology Governance Policies & Standards

|   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Policy Title<br>E-mail Usage Policy   | Document Code No.                   |
| Chief Information Officer Approval<br> | Effective Date<br>November 24, 2004 |

## 1.0 PURPOSE:

To establish policies for use of County property for e-mail services, while protecting County security and assets.

This policy addresses internal County e-mail, Internet e-mail, and other external e-mail. The policy is based on the expectation that e-mail users will exercise common sense and discretion in the use of e-mail.

The content of an entire e-mail message, including attachments, is most analogous to a letter or official memo rather than a telephone call, because a record of the contents of the email may be preserved by the sender, recipient, any parties to whom the e-mail may be forwarded, or by the e-mail system itself. It is important also to remember that once an e-mail message is sent, the sender has no control where it may be forwarded. Deleting a message from the user's computer system does not necessarily delete it from the system. E-mail users are advised that e-mail communications are not subject to personal privacy and may be disclosed pursuant to public disclosure laws and rules of discovery in the event of lawsuits.

## 2.0 APPLICABILITY:

Applicable to King County Government.

## 3.0 REFERENCES:

- 3.1 Etiquette Guidelines for Using King County E-mail
- 3.2 King County Board of Ethics Advisory Opinions 95-1-1106 and 96-08-1146.
- 3.3 King County Code of Ethics Subsections 3.04.020 (A), (B) and (E).
- 3.4 Public Disclosure Act RCW Chapter 42.
- 3.5 INF 17-1 (AEP) Executive Policy on Public Disclosure.
- 3.6 WA State Rules of Discovery

## 4.0 DEFINITIONS:

- 4.1 **Discovery:** Requests for information by a party to litigation.
- 4.2 **E-mail:** Electronic mail; messages and any attachments that are sent by means of electronic mailing systems such as Microsoft's Exchange (or Microsoft's Outlook) or the e-mail provided by most web browsers.

- 4.3 **Global Message:** A message sent to all individuals on the e-mail system, or specific groups on the e-mail system.
  - 4.4 **Internet Mail:** Electronic mail sent or received over the Internet
  - 4.5 **Lawful:** An act which is in compliance with existing federal, state or local laws
  - 4.6 **Personal Business:**
    - 4.6.1 Any use from which an individual derives personal gain or advantage.
    - 4.6.2 Any use involving the advocacy, solicitation, or support of social causes or groups outside the scope of official duties.
    - 4.6.3 Any use for political purposes, inconsistent with existing federal, state or local laws.
  - 4.7 **Public Disclosure:** Requests by a person for records held by a public agency, including King County as described in RCW 42.17
  - 4.8 **User:** Anyone who uses, has permission to use, or is assigned an e-mail account for the King County e-mail system
  - 4.9 **Web Browser:** Software used to access and navigate the world wide web.
- 5.0 POLICIES:
- 5.1 General Use of the E-mail
    - 5.1.1 E-mail is to be used to conduct official County business.
    - 5.1.2 The use of County equipment for personal gain, personal business, commercial advantage, solicitation for any person or non-profit, advocacy of a cause or special interest, political advantage, or any unlawful purpose is prohibited.
    - 5.1.3 Large attachments to e-mail messages should be avoided; other means of distribution should be used.
    - 5.1.4 Global messages (messages sent to everyone) are restricted and must be officially sanctioned King County communications. If your department needs assistance, please call the ITS Help Desk at 684-1875.
    - 5.1.5 It is the responsibility of each user to maintain the security of the e-mail system by not leaving computers unattended when the e-mail system is active and by not sharing-passwords.
    - 5.1.6 Incidental personal use of e-mail which is infrequent or brief in duration is allowed unless specifically prohibited by agency policy or the content of the e-mail otherwise violates this policy.
    - 5.1.7 Use of e-mail for social communications, which improve organizational effectiveness or serve department goals, is allowed.

- 5.1.8 Messages identified as "Attorney Client Privileged Communication" or "Confidential" shall not be forwarded to others unless discussed with the author of the e-mail communication.

5.2 Content of E-mail

- 5.2.1 All communications written or forwarded via e-mail should be professional, appropriate, and lawful as further explained in the Etiquette Guidelines.
- 5.2.2 Personal opinions or preliminary observations should be clearly identified as such.

5.3 Scope

- 5.3.1 This e-mail policy applies to all e-mail users who are provided access to the King County e-mail system.
- 5.3.2 Third parties should only be provided access to the County e-mail system as necessary for a business purpose with the County and only if all applicable rules are followed.
- 5.3.3 This policy applies to e-mail sent via the County's internal e-mail system or via the Internet using County resources.
- 5.3.4 Messages related to medical records or conditions, performance, or discipline should not be sent on the e-mail system.

5.4 Penalties

- 5.4.1 All e-mail users who misuse e-mail privileges shall be disciplined in accordance with the Personnel Guidelines, applicable collective bargaining agreements, and/or other applicable rules or laws. Violation(s) of the e-mail policy may be grounds for dismissal, contract termination, or revocation of e-mail privileges. In addition, violations of this policy or misuse of the e-mail system may be referred for criminal prosecution.
- 5.4.2 Contractors and consultants who are in violation of this policy may be removed from the e-mail system and/or have their contract terminated. In addition, other legal remedies may be pursued.

6.0 RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 6.1 Agencies are responsible for informing e-mail users in the proper use of e-mail. The "Etiquette Guidelines for Using King County E-mail" can be used to assist in the education of staff.
- 6.2 The King County Board of Ethics offers additional guidance on permitted use of e-mail for all County e-mail users.

7.0 POLICY GUIDELINES:

Etiquette Guidelines for Using King County E-mail